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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY RELEVANT ORGANS, FUNDS AND
PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, AS WELL AS OTHER
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, ON THEIR
ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF ACTION PROGRAMMES UNDER THE CONVENTION

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, the Conference of the Parties (COP):

(a) Encouraged relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention; the information provided should include summaries, in principle not exceeding four pages;

(b) Encouraged Parties to make full use of the expertise of competent intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the preparation and in the dissemination of relevant information;

(c) Requested that reports be submitted to the secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed;

(d) Requested the secretariat to compile the information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on measures taken or planned in support of implementation of the Convention.

2. By decisions 2/COP.2, paragraph 1 (d), and 5/COP.2, paragraph 2, the Conference of the Parties, at its second session:

(a) Decided to include in the agenda of its third session, the review of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention;

(b) Invited the relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to report on measures taken to assist action programmes of those affected developing country Parties reporting for the session.

II. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN SUBMITTED REPORTS

3. The secretariat sent reminders to relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and to accredited intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, inviting them to submit their reports, pursuant to decision 2/COP.2. The following summaries have been prepared by the secretariat based on contributions received up to the time of finalization of this report. Further contributions received will also be made available in due time to the COP.

A. Organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

4. FAO activities in the follow-up to the World Food Summit contribute to the implementation of the UNCCD, such as the Special Programme on Food Security, the FAO Subregional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa (programme preventing serious negative impact of future droughts on crop and livestock production in the subregion), the "Farmer-Centred, Integrated Drought Management" Programme (programme with an integrated and participatory approach to better land husbandry and sustainable agriculture in southern Africa). Desertification control and land rehabilitation related projects are also being implemented in a number of countries (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, etc.) in the field of natural resources management, land reclamation, diversification of food security, etc. FAO has also participated in and supported the launching of technical networks on resources monitoring and on agroforestry and soil conservation.

5. In Mali, FAO has supported a combined national action programme (NAP)/ national environmental action plan (NEAP) process through a substantive technical cooperation project in close partnership with the country and Germany, which coordinates bilateral donors. The process has culminated in a national symposium and the adoption of the framework programme by the Government. In addition, FAO along with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has supported the process in Burkina Faso, especially in developing companion projects on participatory natural resources management and regeneration.

6. A draft memorandum of cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention and a memorandum of understanding with IFAD were developed. FAO is also in contact with the Global Mechanism hosted by IFAD. Cooperation is being sought or developed with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aiming at using the Global Environment Facility (GEF) potential in Africa. Finally, FAO produced a CD-ROM with the title "Combating Desertification: Conservation and Development of Dryland Resources".

Ramsar Convention

7. A memorandum of cooperation was prepared between the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands and the secretariat of the UNCCD and signed at Dakar, Senegal in December 1998. The secretariats of both conventions agreed to cooperate in dealing with matters of common interest involving: institutional cooperation, exchange of information and experience, capacity-building, coordination of programmes of work, joint action and consultation and reporting. The Ramsar Convention is also trying to expand its training and capacity-building activities into Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. It will assist with other partners, two African training centres in Cameroon and in Kenya, to develop training modules for wetlands managers in Africa. The Ramsar Bureau has also worked with Botswana on a national wetland policy covering all major issues related to other environment-related treaties, including the UNCCD.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

8. Since the adoption of the UNCCD in June 1994, UNDP has taken several measures in support of UNCCD implementation in Africa. In terms of policy measures, most country offices, bureaux and other units of UNDP are in the process of mainstreaming the UNCCD in UNDP country programmes. UNDP has provided technical and financial support to the NAP awareness-raising and consultative processes leading to convening of the first national forum to identify priority programmes for the NAP, funding arrangements and coordination arrangements. UNDP has entered into partnership in this regard with 28 African countries. Support to the subregional consultative processes leading to the elaboration of the contents and arrangements for the implementation of the subregional action programmes (SRAPs) is provided in collaboration with the subregional African organizations. Additional support is provided for the establishment of mechanisms to support SRAP processes such as the subregional facilitation funds (for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)) and the work of multidisciplinary committees on science and technology (for IGAD and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)). UNDP has supported the development of proposals for the establishment of national desertification funds in 22 African countries for promoting resource mobilization and channelling these to the local level for dryland management activities. Various projects such as a pilot UNDP initiative for promoting farmer innovation in water management in sub-Saharan Africa, a drought preparedness and mitigation programme, an environmental and information system programme as well as a local community-based programme have been launched.

9. Several UNDP country offices (Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Sudan) have allocated a total of US\$ 1,647,000 to support national action programme processes through the country programme resources. The UNDP Trust Fund to Combat Desertification and Drought set up in 1994 has so far mobilized over \$15 million, of which \$14.5 million has been allocated to Africa. Among the key donors for Africa are Australia, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland. Affected countries that have contributed to this fund include Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition to the above resources, UNDP has other programmes and funds whose activities support the UNCCD implementation such as the United Nations Capital Development Fund, Africa 2000 programme - active in 12 African countries, GEF Small Grants Programme, Capacity 21 programme in 25 African countries and UNDP GEF unit. UNDP is also playing an active role in the Global Mechanism facilitation committee.

10. UNDP has been active in developing materials on UNCCD concepts and operational approaches to promote UNCCD implementation, particularly in Africa. Some of the key concept papers include: "Early lessons and elements for a revised approach", "First Forum" concept; "SRAP: Elements of an approach"; and "Debt-for-Environment Swaps for National Desertification Funds". Technical and financial support to networking activities with non-governmental and community-based organizations were also developed, aiming at strengthening them for effective participation in the NAP/SRAP processes. UNDP supported the subregional International NGO Network on Desertification

(RIOD) for the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) region, which led to the elaboration of a strategy to strengthen the capacity of this subregional network. Two training workshops were organized in Africa for English- and French-speaking focal points (Nairobi and Lomé) to strengthen capacities of the UNDP country offices and national coordinators for NAP.

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)*

11. Through the Man and the Biosphere Programme, long-standing research projects are being carried out on soil erosion, pastoral and agricultural management in arid zones and carrying capacities of drylands. In its fourth year of implementation, nearly 200 African scientists have already received training under a special project entitled "Arid and Semi-arid Land Management in Africa". In collaboration with partners from the United States of America and Europe, UNESCO is implementing the "Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring" initiative which collects environmental data which could be used in the field of the Convention's work on desertification benchmarks and indicators. The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme promotes the collection of data on available water resources to ensure an appropriate management of water resources; a special project "Women and Water Resources" is carried out in several African countries. The International Geological Correlation Programme launched a five-year project on understanding future dryland changes from past dynamics, to explore the causes and magnitudes of future changes in drylands. Also, under the Geological Applications of Remote Sensing Programme, pilot projects addressed the erosion processes using remote sensing and geographical information. Finally, UNESCO was involved in the "Solar Summit" held in Zimbabwe in 1996 and in the World Solar Programme promoting the use of alternative and renewable energy sources such as solar energy, but also wind, water, and geothermal energy, especially in rural areas.

12. With regard to education, UNESCO is planning, in collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat, to prepare environmental education kits on combating desertification for primary school children, especially in desertification-affected countries. UNESCO plans to complement the environmental education kits on desertification with non-formal education schemes, which could also reach adults. The UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg, Germany also set up a "Regional Environmental Education and Training Centre to Combat Desertification" in Chad for the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria). Finally, UNESCO has also prepared with other partners a CD-ROM on "Arid Zones and Desertification".

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

13. UNIFEM programmes and projects address desertification through its impact on limiting women's economic empowerment and well-being, affecting the livelihoods of families. In Ghana and Nigeria, UNIFEM intervenes through the Renewable Energy Systems Development programme, aimed at building local capacity of women to develop, operate and maintain alternative and renewable energy systems using agricultural and human waste, so as to enable them to run profitably small and medium enterprises with reduced dependency on fuelwood. In Cape Verde and Senegal, one programme focuses on building women's capacity

in marketing strategies and on increasing their bargaining power to create sustainable livelihoods; 500 women are currently being trained. In Burkina Faso, 300 women shea butter producers have been trained through a Luxembourg-funded project, executed by the Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale. UNIFEM also publishes the Energy and Environment Technology Sourcebooks as well as the Food Technology Sourcebooks series.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

14. UNEP support to the implementation of the Convention is mainly through GEF project development and implementation, and support to regional coordination, with a particular focus on Africa. UNEP implements GEF-supported full-scale projects on land degradation: "People, Land Management and Environmental Change" executed by the United Nations University, on the conservation of *in situ* agrobiodiversity in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and South and Central America; "Desert Margins Programme" with UNEP and UNDP support for the preparation of a multidisciplinary project covering nine sub-Saharan countries; two projects on land degradation jointly implemented by UNEP and UNDP "Community-based Rehabilitation of the Degraded Lands of the Transboundary Areas of Senegal and Mauritania" and "Management of Indigenous Vegetation for Rehabilitation of Degraded Rangelands in the Arid Zone of Africa", with field sites in Botswana, Kenya and Mali. UNEP is also facilitating the preparation of a project on land degradation in the semi-arid transboundary areas of Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Other transboundary land degradation projects in East and West Africa are in earlier stages of preparation. Steps have been initiated to assess the interlinkages of climate change and desertification and the impact of climate change in the drylands of Africa. Efforts are also under way to assess wind erosion problems and control strategies in Africa and West Asia. A case study on the cost of desertification and its impact on food security in Zimbabwe is under implementation with national institutions and the International Soil Reference and Information Centre.

15. UNEP has joined the efforts of the UNCCD secretariat, both substantively and financially, to assist in the elaboration of national reports on the implementation of the Convention. UNEP hosted a technical meeting to finalize the guidelines for the preparation of the national reports and a subregional workshop for the IGAD region to brief national UNCCD focal points on the adopted procedures. The financial contribution enabled national forums to be convened to finalize the reports using a participatory approach. Under the overall umbrella of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), UNEP jointly with UNCCD hosted an African Regional Preparatory Conference for COP.3. A series of consultations with partner organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, IFAD, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism have been held in order to strengthen inter-agency collaboration in the field of combating desertification, particularly in Africa. UNEP is providing support for the establishment of the regional coordination unit in Abidjan. To strengthen the role of civil society in the implementation of the UNCCD, UNEP provides assistance to non-governmental organizations to attend relevant meetings and workshops, such as the conference of RIOD and the Conference of the Parties.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

16. The International Conference on Population and Development programme of action in 1994 emphasized the need to fully integrate population concerns into development strategies and planning, taking into account the inter-relationships of population with poverty eradication, environment (including desertification), food security, adequate shelter, human resources and basic social services for all. UNFPA, with UNEP and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), organized the International Workshop on Population-Poverty-Environment Linkages in 1998, bringing policy decision-makers, community-based leaders, national and regional participants from Africa to identify lessons learned from case studies and programme practices.

17. In 1998, UNFPA continued to provide support to the Centre for Research on Population and Development, a subregional institution of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, which undertakes research linkages in population and environment, including drought control. The Fund also works with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Department for Food Security and Sustainable Development, to build and disseminate a better understanding throughout the region of the complex interactions between food security, population and environment, using the population-environment-development-agriculture simulation model. This model was developed in the past with UNFPA support. Within African countries, UNFPA worked closely within the United Nations Resident Coordinator system, and with United Nations partners, through common country assessments/United Nations development assistance frameworks, national commissions on planning, commissions on sustainable development and local Agenda 21s (or their equivalent) in support of integrated policy and planning.

United Nations University (UNU)

18. In its report, the UNU recalled in particular the West African cluster of its project on people, land management and environmental change. It also announced its intention to organize an international symposium on new technologies to combat desertification in Tunisia in 1999, to provide for an exchange of information and views among experts from both within and outside the United Nations system.

World Food Programme (WFP)

19. Since 1964, WFP has been playing a critical role in combating desertification and bringing land back into production. A total of US\$ 4.8 billion has been spent in support of environmental protection, natural resource management and disaster mitigation. Annually, WFP spends US\$ 230 million on forestation, soil conservation and other activities to promote environmentally sustainable agricultural production. WFP provides employment through food-for-work activities such as tree planting and soil and water conservation; improves household food security through activities which improve agricultural production and household incomes, for example, small scale irrigation; and contributes to sustainable land improvement: forestry, land and water development, rangelands management, training in forestry and agriculture.

20. In Africa, WFP works to prevent soil-nutrient depletion emphasizing traditional soil conservation efforts, such as the use of vegetative and/or stone lines across the landscape to trap moisture and break up the water flow. Natural resources and environmental food-for-work projects carried out by unemployed or underemployed workers during slack agricultural seasons reduce seasonal unemployment and hunger. In 1998 in sub-Saharan Africa, WFP assisted 1.8 million beneficiaries through agricultural and rural development activities. A total of US\$ 81 million, or 13 per cent of annual expenditures, was spent on agricultural and rural development in Africa (agricultural production, food reserves, rural infrastructure and settlement). Currently WFP has more than 30 such ongoing development activities, in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. Furthermore, WFP works closely with its African government counterparts to improve early-warning and response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. WFP has established several vulnerability analyses and mapping units in regional and country offices in Africa to assist in the identification of food-insecure and poor households, the causes of their vulnerability and their needs.

B. Intergovernmental organizations

Agence de la francophonie/Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la francophonie (ACCT/IEPF)

21. By decision of a ministerial meeting of francophone countries held on the occasion of COP.1, the ACCT was invited to prepare, in cooperation with industrialized developed country members, an evaluation of urgent measures taken to support African countries of the francophone community. This report was presented by the Executive Director of IEPF at a francophone assembly held on the occasion of COP.2 and a decision was taken to finalize the report and submit it to the secretariat for COP.3.

22. The study summarizes the progress made in the formulation of national action programmes and their harmonization with current policies and planning, outlines the innovative approaches undertaken and reviews the support of the international community, the United Nations system, the international funding agencies, the private sector and the civil society for efforts to combat desertification and drought mitigation. The document also highlights the importance given to the UNCCD by each partner and the changes in their approach either as a recipient or as a donor country. In this context, indicators were also developed.

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)

23. During 1998, AOAD has carried out many activities in the development of natural resources and combat against desertification with the participation of some of the Arab countries in Africa (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, the Sudan, Tunisia). The activities undertaken concerned the following: regional training courses and workshops as well as regional and country studies related, inter alia, to the protection and conservation of soil or water resources, sandy soil reclamation, biodiversity, agricultural impact or forest development; country symposiums in Algeria, Egypt and Mauritania; preparation of a working paper on

AOAD efforts and institutional capacity to combat desertification" and a directory of institutions and bodies concerned with desertification control in the Arab region; execution of developmental and contractual projects at the regional and country levels such as a project to combat desertification encroachment using green belts in the Arab countries (including all countries of North Africa) and a project on the development of appropriate technologies for sandy soil reclamation in Algeria.

*Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
(CEDARE)*

24. A regional workshop on preparation and financing of national action programmes to combat desertification was held in Cairo, Egypt on July 1998, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO). The workshop was the first meeting of the Arab Network for Combating Desertification and aimed at developing training on preparation of NAPs, partnership between national institutions, regional institutions and the donor, community and creating a network of institutions to support efforts in combating desertification.

25. CEDARE also undertook various other activities with countries of North Africa, such as the development of regional and national databases, a geographical information system on natural resources, an environmental information systems and environmental institutions database as well as directories of environmental experts and CEDARE activities. CEDARE also contributed to the preparation of the UNEP Global Environmental Outlook GEO-2 Africa. Furthermore, capacity-building and training activities were undertaken from 1996 to 1999, in particular in the field of environmental geographical information systems. Technical assistance was brought to Djibouti, Egypt and the Sudan on environmental information systems. Finally, a joint activity in cooperation with IFAD, among others, aims to develop a regional strategy for the utilization of the Nubian sandstone aquifer and the overlying arid lands within the eastern Sahara in North-East Africa.

European Union

26. The European Union drew attention to its Action Plan for the Protection of Natural Resources and Combating Desertification in Africa, under which 230 programmes had been carried out throughout the continent between 1986 and 1989 at a cost of nearly 2 billion euros.

27. Multilateral cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa over the past 24 years was undertaken within the framework of the Lomé conventions (with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States) and through its financial instrument, the European Development Fund. The first three Lomé conventions placed altogether 16 billion euros (95 per cent in grants) at the disposal of the ACP States, which have established their own priorities. Lomé III placed strong emphasis on food security; drought and desertification control were specifically addressed within the agricultural policy provisions. Under the revised Lomé IV, the national indicative programmes of five African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mauritania, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) and one regional

indicative programme (East Africa) gave considerable importance to natural resource management and the participatory approach to environmental protection. They allot a reasonable percentage of funds to those broad categories in which programmes and projects against desertification can easily be undertaken. Others have focal areas that are also clearly targeted on the protection of natural resources.

28. There are also two thematic budget lines, "Tropical Forests" and "Environment in the Developing Countries", managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development (DG VIII). One of the five priority areas of the latter budget line concerns improving practices for the conservation of soils and farmland, management and protection of forests and the fight against desertification. Between 1990 and 1995, 20.6 million euros were committed to desertification-related projects under both budget lines, more than 50 per cent of which went to projects in Africa. Details of these projects are contained in a report distributed by the European Community to delegates at the first session of the Conference of the Parties in 1997. Between 1996 and 1998, DG VIII committed a total of 43.7 million euros and 24.5 million euros, respectively, to the two above-mentioned budget lines. Numerous anti-desertification activities continue to be undertaken. Details will be contained in a revised report, which will be distributed at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2000.

29. Since 1994, around 18 million euros have been committed to financing research projects in agriculture and natural resources in ACP States, under the International Cooperation with Developing Countries (INCO-DC), a subprogramme of the Framework Research Programme of DG XII. They include a variety of activities in eastern and southern Africa. DG XII co-financed a workshop on strategies for sustainable development in the dryland areas of East Africa (Addis Ababa, 1998) and plans to finance another one on data and information requirements for interdisciplinary research into desertification in the Mediterranean Basin and in sub-Saharan Africa (October 1999, Sassari, Italy).

*International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
(ICRISAT)*

30. ICRISAT, which is the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) lead centre for the UNCCD, was chosen to host the system-wide Desert Margins Initiative (DPM), which in 1998 transformed itself into a full-fledged programme operating in three sub-Saharan regions: eastern Africa (Kenya), western Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal) and southern Africa (Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe). DPM is an eco-regional initiative combining physical, biological, economic and sociological dimensions of the production environment and seeking to blend natural sciences and socio-economic research. Its mission is to enhance food security and reduce poverty in the desert margins of sub-Saharan Africa by promoting innovative and action-oriented dryland management research to reduce land degradation. Research is carried out by a multidisciplinary team of scientists in each member country in close association with the national, regional, and international research programmes, non-governmental organizations and local communities.

31. DMP has undertaken a series of short-term activities as part of its commitment to contribute to the implementation of the UNCCD such as: compilation and use of existing dryland management technologies; studies on selected representative benchmark sites; development of multi-scale decision support systems; participation in the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) network survey; direct collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat. DMP is exploring possibilities for promoting crop diversification in the desert margins of sub-Saharan Africa. In 1997, it organized a workshop on date palm cultivation in collaboration with regional, national, and international research organizations, with support from the International Development Research Centre. A regional project is being finalized by DMP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the International Programme for Arid Land.

Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS)

32. In the context of measures and activities carried out by OSS, a users' guide to the matrix of indicators on the implementation of the CCD was prepared in November 1998, together with CILSS, in order to help African countries to put in place a tool for monitoring and evaluation of their processes of preparation and implementation of national action programmes (NAPs). OSS also contributed to the CCD secretariat's review of the format of national reports (Geneva, February 1999) by supplying a paper jointly with UNITAR, and also participated, using its own resources, in the meeting held to finalize the "CCD national reports help guide" (UNEP, Nairobi, March 1999). In addition, under its programme "Support for the implementation of the CCD", OSS released the human and financial resources needed to participate, with the CCD executive secretariat and UNITAR, in leading the subregional meetings organized within AMU, IGAD and SADC for national focal points and subregional consultants. Lastly, OSS contributed to the drawing up of the AMU subregional action programme (SRAP) and its report to COP.3, in particular in the sections on monitoring and evaluation.

Organization of African Unity (OAU)

33. The OAU continues to operate the Special Emergency Fund for Drought Famine in Africa as well as the integrated Development Project of the Fouta Djallon Highland in Guinea. At subregional level, the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources of OAU has included anti-desertification components in several of its projects (in Ethiopia and Djibouti). Other activities in East Africa involve the inclusion of environmental impact analysis in project activities of eight African countries. The Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development Programme provides research, capacity-building and scientific information dissemination services to member States. It also provides assistance to African country Parties to the UNCCD in the preparation of their national and regional action programmes, especially as regard food grain research and development. The OAU signed an agreement with, and committed US\$ 300,000 to, the UNCCD secretariat through the African Development Bank. In order to ensure coherent and coordinated implementation of the Rio conventions in an African context, OAU initiated work on the revision of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources of 1968 (Algiers Convention) to bring it into line with recent international environmental agreements.

34. The OAU policy organs meeting in Algiers in July 1999 adopted a continental coordination mechanism for the implementation of the UNCCD. An annual coordination meeting will be organized between the regional organs to follow-up on developments and to allow for an exchange of views and experience. Similar meetings will be held on an annual basis at the subregional level. The mechanism also includes activities of research and development on traditional knowledge, know-how and practices in the sphere of desertification control.

West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)

35. Desertification control is one of the major objectives of WAEMU in the field of environmental improvement policy at the subregional level. WAEMU pursued its activities alongside the two liaison centres, ECOWAS and CILSS, which were entrusted with coordinating the preparation and implementation of the SRAP for West Africa. Since its establishment in 1995, the Commission of WAEMU has participated in all the phases of preparation of the SRAP as an active member of the various bodies set up for that purpose. In particular, it participated in the meeting of intergovernmental organizations in the subregion in Lomé in 1996, the SRAP Forum of Actors in Niamey in 1997 and the various meetings of the thematic groups. As the leader of the group on "Sustainable management of transboundary plant and animal resources", the Commission contacted international agencies (World Bank, UNEP, UNESCO, IEPF, etc.) with a view to developing joint programmes and thematic studies in this field. In addition to a cooperation agreement signed in 1998 with the CCD secretariat, partnership agreements are being drawn up with IFAD, FAO, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

36. In 1998 the Commission of WAEMU set up a fund to provide assistance for regional integration targeted primarily on the most deprived regions of the Union, including those worst-affected by the problems of desertification and drought. Its aim is, inter alia, to support production and trade activities and to contribute to improving the living conditions of the people and protection of the environment. Drawing on the Union's own resources, the fund will be operational in the year 2000 for national or cross-frontier projects. Discussions are under way with the Global Mechanism to mobilize other development partners.

C. Non-governmental organizations

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

37. The IPU Council endorsed in Brussels (April 1999) the final declaration adopted by the meeting of parliamentarians on the occasion of COP.2 (ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1, annex V) and decided to grant IPU sponsorship to a second meeting of parliamentarians to be held during COP.3.

Solidarité Canada Sahel (SCS)

38. Solidarité Canada Sahel has been involved since 1995 in facilitating the participation of Sahelian actors in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) and COP sessions with Canadian funding, under a programme designed to strengthen civil society in the Sahel. SCS supported the holding

of national forums in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger which contributed to the creation of national committees in the three countries. It also supported Mali in organizing a subregional forum on desertification and land tenure. With the International Fund for Agricultural Development, a leaflet on traditional knowledge and practices in combating desertification was produced. Furthermore strong exchanges and encouragements have been provided in the context of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought on 17 June, especially with Mali in 1997. A leaflet was produced by SCS and the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) on the experience gained from the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.
